Words in bold are defined elsewhere in the glossary.

_aedile_ One of the lesser _magistrates_. There were two _plebeian_ aediles and two _curule_ aediles, originally _patricians_, responsible for the running of the city: they organised public festivals and games, and were responsible for public works, roads, traffic and markets in Rome.

_aerarium_ The state treasury.

_ager publicus_ Public land owned by the state.

_ambitus_ Electoral bribery.

_amici_ Political allies.

_amicitia_ An informal alliance or political friendship.

_annals_ Histories written in a strictly chronological order, giving the events of each year in sequence. The adjective is ‘annalistic’.

_Appian Way_ The road from Rome to Brundisium. It was begun in the fourth century as a military project by Appius Claudius Caecus. Six thousand supporters of Spartacus were crucified along the road by Crassus in 71.

_assembly_ See _comitia_. A reference to ‘the Assembly’ indicates the _concilium plebis_.

_auctoritas_ Personal influence and prestige separate from the powers obtained from holding office, and based upon wealth, services to the state and the people (particularly military achievement) and, or so the individual with _auctoritas_ would claim, the moral authority that he possessed because of his character.

_augur_ A priest who interpreted _auspices_ to determine the will of the gods.

_auspices_ Signs from the gods in the form of the flight patterns of birds, requiring interpretation.

_auxiliary_ A non-citizen, non-_legionary_ soldier in the Roman army.

_Bona Dea_ The Good Goddess, whose festival, organised by the _Vestals_, could be celebrated only by women.

_boni_ See _optimate_.

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Campus Martius  The Field of Mars, a large area outside the *pomerium* where *magisterial* elections took place (see *Saepta*) and where armies gathered before and after campaigns.

Caesarian  A supporter of Julius Caesar; similarly, there were Marians, Sullans, Pompeians and Antonians.

censors  Two senior politicians elected for eighteen months, in principle every five years (but many five-year periods passed without the election of censors), to take a census of the population and review the composition of the *Senate*.

clementia  Mercifulness, in particular readiness to forgive political enemies; a characteristic particularly demonstrated by Julius Caesar during and after the Civil War.

client  The inferior in a relationship of mutual benefit and obligations. Clients might be seen by their *patrons’* houses in the morning or accompany them down the street to show their wealth and influence, canvass and vote for their patrons, or do them political favours if they were themselves important men.

client ruler  Client kings and queens ruled their kingdoms without interference in internal affairs, but were obliged to work for the interests of Rome in foreign policy, in return for military protection.

clientela  A network of *clients* (plural *clientelae*).

collegia, colleges  Associations of citizens, including the Colleges of *Pontiffs* and *Augurs* and other religious bodies, but most often of working men, similar to guilds; politicised by Clodius.

colony  A settlement of Roman citizens outside Rome.

comitia  A formal meeting of Roman citizens to pass laws or elect a magistrate.

comitia centuriata  Assembly where citizens voted in their military centuries, units divided on class lines that reflected the roles of different classes within the army. It elected *consuls* and *praetors* and *censors* and met on the *Campus Martius* outside the *pomerium* to reflect its military origins.

comitia tributa  Assembly where citizens voted in their tribes (the thirty-five originally geographical divisions of citizens). It elected the *curule aediles* and *quaestors*.

commercium  The citizen’s right to enter into legally enforceable contracts.

consilium plebis  The *Plebeian Assembly*, arranged into tribes like the *comitia tributa* but excluding the *patricians*, which elected the *tribunes* and *plebeian aediles* and passed *plebiscita*, laws which, although not passed by the whole citizen body, were binding on all citizens like the laws passed by the other assemblies.

concordia ordinum  The Harmony of the Orders as defined by Cicero in 63, all groups in society working together for the benefit of Rome.
connubium The citizen’s right to form a legally binding marriage contract.

consilium A group of advisers to a magistrate.

consuls The chief magistrates. Two annually elected officials holding imperium.

consulars Those who had been consuls.

consules suffecti Consuls appointed by an interrex during the Republic, by Augustus in his reign. They were replacements for a consul after the beginning of the year; a suffect consul enjoyed less prestige than a consul who was in office on 1 January, as sufects did not give their name to the year.

contio An informal political meeting summoned by a magistrate, often a tribune (plural contiones).

curator A person with a specific designated responsibility, e.g. for the grain or water supply, usually over a period longer than the year that magistrates spent in office (plural curatores).

Curia The Senate House; the building itself was sacrosanct.

cursus honorum The ladder of magisterial offices.

curule chair A folding stool, originally made of ivory. Magistrates with imperium sat on a curule chair to symbolise their power.

denarius A unit of currency, worth four sesterces. The denarius coin was the commonest silver coin.

dictatorship Office, usually lasting six months, granted to one man during an emergency. A dictator’s powers could not be checked by any other magistrate or by tribunician veto. A dictator held the imperium of two consuls.

dignitas A man’s claim to be respected and recognised, based upon his pedigree, wealth and achievements; more closely linked with official status and offices held than auctoritas.

divination Discovering the will of the gods, usually through signs and omens.

divisores Electoral agents responsible for the distribution of bribes.

dominatio The relationship of a master to a slave. In political terms it meant absolute or tyrannical power.

do ut des The patron/client relationship worked using this principle: I give in order that you may give back.

edict A decree issued by an authority and so having some legal force, but not a law.

equestrian A member of the class of equites; something concerning or connected with the equites.

equites The wealthiest class of Roman citizens who were not senators.

Etruscans The people who lived to the north and west of Rome, in the area now known in English as Tuscany. They ruled over Rome in its very early history and were thought to have supplied Rome’s last two kings
before the Republic was established. They had a marked influence on Roman culture: gladiatorial contests originated with the Etruscans.

fama  Reputation.

fasces  The symbolic bundle of rods carried by the lictors who attended the magistrates with imperium; it demonstrated the power of the magistrate to impose punishment. Holders of higher offices had an axe in the middle of the bundle of rods, showing that their power extended to capital punishment.

fasti  Annual lists, usually of consuls or Triumphators.

filibuster  To ‘talk out’ a proposal by making a speech so long that there is no time left to vote; a favourite political technique of Cato’s.

flamen  A priest devoted to one particular god (plural flamines).

forum  The open area in the centre of Italian cities, a combination of central market place and civic centre. The ‘Forum’ (capital F), if otherwise unspecified, refers to the original forum of Rome, the Forum Romanum.

freedman  A freed ex-slave (also ‘freedwoman’).

Games  See Ludi.

genius  The divine spirit of a person or place (plural genii).

gratia  Influence, importance.

Hellenistic  Referring to the Greeks in the period between the conquests of Alexander the Great in the late fourth century and the death of Cleopatra in 30, and to the kingdoms of the Eastern Mediterranean into which Alexander’s empire split after his death, ruled by Greek dynasties.

hostis  An enemy, either a foreign enemy or a Roman declared to be an enemy of the state or ‘public enemy’; a hostis had no rights and his killer would not be punished (plural hostes).

Ides  The third of the three fixed days in each Roman calendar month. The Ides fell two Roman eight-day weeks before the end of the month, that is, on the 13th in most months and on the 15th of the long months March, May, July and October.

imperator  Originally a word shouted as a sign of respect from troops to their commander after victory in battle; a general so addressed by his troops could take the word as a temporary title.

imperial province  A province within the area given to the emperor to rule during the Principate. This area covered most of the Empire and, eventually, all provinces with any military importance. Governors within the imperial provinces were, technically speaking, only legati, i.e. they were deputising for the emperor.

imperium  Supreme authority held by senior magistrates, the right to take immediate decisions without consultation, always associated with offices that were (at least in origin) military. Dictators, consuls, praetors, Masters of the Horse and curule aediles held imperium.
in absentia  The right to stand for office without attending the elections in person.

incestum  Sexual relations between those for whom marriage would be illegal, e.g. incest or sex with a Vestal Virgin; after the Bona Dea scandal, also the violation of the prohibitions associated with virgin goddesses, e.g. male invasion of their sacred rites.

intercalary A month inserted into a calendar to get it back in line with the seasons.

intercessio  The right of veto possessed by tribunes.

interrex  A patrician appointed by the Senate for five days in the absence of consuls to arrange consular elections.

iudicia  Justice.

ius  Right, law.

lares  The ancestral spirits of a family, worshipped at a shrine within the house, the lararium.

lares compitales  Gods of the crossroads; each crossroads in Rome had its own set of lares.

latifundia  Large-scale farms using tenant and slave labour. Technically, a latifundium was a mixed farm in which crops were grown and animals reared; large-scale farms devoted to one activity, e.g. vine-growing, were villa estates.

legatus, legate Assistant to a commander or governor, with delegated imperium; in Augustus' reign, a legionary commander or governor of an imperial province, since the official commander or governor was the emperor himself (plural legati).

legion  A body of legionaries, heavily armed citizen infantry soldiers, approximately 5,000 strong.

libertas  Freedom from tyrannical rule, the freedom of the people, personal freedom.

lictor  The attendant of a magistrate with imperium; carried fasces.

ludi  Entertainments as part of a religious festival. The traditional English translation 'Games' is misleading, since they were theatrical shows as often as sports.

magister equitum  The Master of the Horse, deputy to a dictator.

magistrate  Anyone elected to a position of political power; not, as in the modern English usage, a kind of judge. The adjective is 'magisterial'.

maiestas (minuta)  Treason.

maius imperium  Power superior to that of other holders of imperium in a given area.

Master of the Horse  See magister equitum.

modius  A measure of volume for dry goods: one-third of the capacity of the large Roman jars called amphorae, about two gallons or nine litres.
municipium A community with partial Roman citizenship, *sine suffragio*. the local *magistrates*, however, were often given Roman citizenship (plural *municipia*).

mos maiorum Rome’s ancestral customs.

nobilis, noble Member of the *nobilitas*, i.e. a descendant of a *consul* (plural *nobiles*).

nomen Latinum A Latin ally (see Introduction).

novus homo A ‘new man’, from the first generation of his family to enter the *Senate* (plural *novi homines*).

oligarchy Any political system in which power is officially or unofficially restricted to a small group, whether inheritors of land (aristocracy), the rich (plutocracy), priests (hierarchy), generals (junta) or others.

optimate/optimates Those *senators* who believed in the collective supremacy of the *Senate*. They called themselves the *boni*, the ‘good men’.

optimo iure Possessing full political and private rights.

orbis (terrarum) The whole world (as the Romans thought it was, so not including America, the Pacific or sub-Saharan Africa).

ordo, order One of the classes into which Roman society was divided, based on the value of property owned (plural *ordines*).

ovation A parade awarded for military success, similar to a *Triumph* but not as prestigious; generals who had won victories over slaves or pirates, for example, rather than a foreign state, could receive only an *ovation*.

paterfamilias The head of a Roman household; even a man who was the father of a family would not be a *paterfamilias* if his own father was still alive.

pater/pares patriae Father of the Country or Fatherland. An honorary title.

patricians Those who claimed descent from the earliest nobility of Rome. Certain priesthoods could be held only by them, but by the late *Republic* no political offices were restricted to patricians. They could not be *tribunes* or vote in the *concilium plebis*.

patron The superior in a relationship of mutual benefit and obligations. Patrons might offer their clients food, money, work or loans. The patron–client relationship was based on the principle *do ut des*, ‘I give in order that you may give back’.

penates Gods of thresholds and store cupboards, worshipped within the household together with the *lares*.

peninsular Italy That part of Italy surrounded on three sides by sea, that is, the area south of Pisae (Pisa) in the west and Ariminum (Rimini) in the East. The area north of this that is part of modern Italy was, in ancient times, Cisapline Gaul. Italy in the late *Republic* did not include this area, Sicily or Sardinia, and was, therefore, much smaller than the modern country.

people, the See *plebs urbana*. 

Glossary
People, The See **populus Romanus**.

**pietas** Dutifulness: doing one’s duty towards gods, family and country.

plebeian Not of **patrician** status.

Plebeian Assembly See **concilium plebis**.

**plebiscita** Resolutions of the **Plebeian Assembly** with the binding force of law.

plebs urbana Roman citizens living in Rome not in the **senatorial** or **equestrian** class. Not to be confused with **plebeians**, who comprised all Romans, including **nobles**, who were not **patricians**, or with the modern colloquial term ‘pleb’: the **plebs urbana** included all but the richest Romans. ‘The people’ in Roman history means the **plebs urbana**.

**pomerium** Rome’s sacred boundary; armed men were not normally permitted to cross this boundary into the city (alternative spelling **pomoerium**).

**pontiff** A priest, adviser to **Senate** and **People** on matters of religion.

**pontifex maximus** The chief priest, head of the **College** of **Pontiffs**, elected for life.

**populus Romanus** The whole Roman citizen body, including **patricians** and those living outside Rome. Not to be confused with the **plebeians** or the **plebs urbana**. In English, ‘the People’ (capital P).

**popularis** Senators who believed that the **tribunes** and **Assemblies** should play an important role in Roman politics; opponents of the **optimates** (plural **populares**).

**potestas** (1) The power held by the lesser **magistrates**, which did not give them the freedom of decision enjoyed by holders of **imperium**. (2) A word that indicates the powers of an office; Augustus frequently had assigned to him the **potestas** of an office (the **censorship**, **tribunate** or **consulship**) without holding the office itself.

praetor One of a number of annually elected **magistrates** holding **imperium**. Their duties were mainly judicial.

praetor urbanus The most important of the **praetors**, the chief **magistrate** for the administration of justice, who heard cases between citizens and took charge of the city in the absence of the **consuls**: because of this, the **praetor urbanus** could not leave Rome for more than ten days at a time. Like all praetors, he had responsibility for producing a set of **ludi**, in his case the Ludi Apollinares.

praetorian guard In the **Republic**, a general’s bodyguard; in Augustus’ reign it became an elite part of the army, accompanying the emperor on campaign, based near Rome.

prefect A ‘man put in charge’, someone appointed by a more powerful man to perform a particular task, not a **magistrate** or **promagistrate**.

**primus inter pares** First among equals: one exercising temporary power according to the principles of shared responsibility and limited individual power upon which the **Republic** was built.
princeps  A leading man within a community (plural principes). In the Principate, ‘the Princeps’ means the emperor.

princeps civitatis  The most important citizen in Rome.

princeps senatus  The chief senator, the elder statesman of the Senate, who had the right to speak first.

Principate  The period of the earlier emperors, that is, of the rule of one leading man. Older books refer to this period as the ‘Roman Empire’, using the term Empire to indicate the rule of emperors, but it is very confusing to use the word Empire to refer both to a place (Rome and its conquered territories) and to a time (the period following the Republic).

privatus  A private citizen, an individual not currently holding a magistracy.

privati cum imperio  Non-magistrates with imperium, who could replace governors if no promagistrate was available immediately.

proconsul  See promagistrate.

procurator  An equestrian or freedman appointed by the emperor to take care of financial business, especially one who looked after the finances of an imperial province; he was not subject to the authority of the governor, but reported directly to the emperor.

promagistrate  One given a grant of imperium with the status of a consul (proconsul) or praetor (propraetor), to enable him either to rule in a province or command a military campaign or both.

proscription  Condemning political enemies to death and confiscating their estates by publishing their names on a list and rewarding those who hunted them down.

province  Originally, the scope of a specific task assigned to a Roman magistrate or promagistrate; later, specifically the geographical area assigned to a governor, and so an area within the Empire.

provocatio  The citizen’s right of appeal against the act of a Roman magistrate.

public enemy  See hostis.

public province  A province under the Principate whose governor was still appointed by the Senate, not part of the area under the direct control of the emperor. Known as ‘senatorial provinces’ in older books, a term that is now severely frowned upon.

publicani  Companies of equites involved in tax collecting or other large public projects.

quaestio  A permanent criminal court (plural quaestiones).

quaestorship  The first step on the ladder of offices, the most junior magistracy that secured entry to the Senate; the duties were mainly financial.

regnum  Monarchy.

repetundae  The recovery of goods and wealth extorted from provincials (often found in the ablative form, repetundis). 

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Republic, Republican  A republic is a state without a monarch; Republicans were opponents of Caesar and Augustus: they wished to return to the days of collegial Senate government before over-mighty generals or one-man rule. The Roman Republic was said to have been established in 509 with the expulsion of the last king of Rome, ceased to exist in any meaningful way when Julius Caesar was appointed to a perpetual dictatorship in 44, and was ended in the 20s with the introduction of the Principate by Augustus.

rex  A king.
Rostra  The speakers’ platforms in the Forum, from which politicians addressed the people.
Sacred Way  The road leading from the edge of the city to the Capitol in Rome, down which a general and his army processed in a Triumph.
sacrosanctity  See tribunician sacrosanctity.
Saepta  The voting area on the Campus Martius where elections were held.
SCU  See senatus consultum ultimum.
Senate  Originally a body of advisers to the kings, then of ex-magistrates who advised current magistrates. They could issue decrees and produce Bills but not, technically, pass laws, although in many areas, especially finance and foreign affairs, the people’s assemblies tended to bow to their judgement, to such an extent that a Senate decree might be acted upon even when it had not been passed into law by an assembly.
senator  Member of the Senate.

senatus consultum ultimum (SCU)  The emergency decree of the Senate. Also known as the SCU. It gave the consul power to take whatever measures he deemed necessary in the circumstances to restore order.

sestertius  The basic Roman unit of currency (in the plural, the English form of the word is used: sesterces).

Seven Hills  The original seven hills of Rome, the Quirinal, Viminal, Esquiline, Caelian, Capitoline, Palatine and Aventine. Of course, by the end of this period Rome had expanded hugely and included other hills such as the Pincian, and the Vatican and Janiculan hills across the Tiber.
sine suffragio  Without voting rights.
socii Italici  Rome’s Italian allies who had no political or private rights but were expected to fight for Rome.
solar calendar  The ‘real’ calendar, that is to say, the division of the year into seasons. Before Julius Caesar’s reform, the official Roman calendar was often out of step with the solar calendar, e.g. October might be midwinter. See intercalary months.

spolia opima  Spoils given to a commander of a Roman army who had killed in single combat the ruler of a people at war with Rome.
standards  The eagle-headed poles with flags carried by legions; to lose them in battle was the ultimate disgrace, and usually happened only after catastrophic defeat.

subsistence farming  Growing food and keeping animals in order to provide for oneself and one’s family, rather than in order to sell produce.

suffect consuls  See consules suffecti.

sumptuary law  A law restricting private expenditure.

supplicatio  A public vote of thanks (plural supplicationes).

talent  A measure of weight and currency. A Roman talent was 32.3 kg, so, since the sestertius was worth one-quarter of the value of the 4 g silver denarius coin, one talent of silver was worth 32,300 sesterces. The Greek silver talent was less heavy, worth 24,000–26,000 sesterces.

templum  Any consecrated land in which any building stood, even a small shrine; note that the Latin word refers to the whole enclosure.

tithe  A 10 per cent tax on produce.

toga praetexta  Purple-bordered toga worn by office holders with imperium.

tribunes  Ten annually elected plebeians who represented the interests of the plebeians in the Assembly. They did not have imperium, but they could veto any proposals, including those made by their fellow tribunes. There were also twenty-four elected military tribunes, junior officers who were attached to the legions.

tribuni aerarii  The class just below the equites in wealth and rank.

tribunician sacrosanctity  The divine protection given to the person of the tribune; during their office, tribunes were inviolable, that is, to attack them physically was an offence against the gods.

Triumph  Awarded to generals who had killed more than 5,000 enemies. The victorious army paraded through the city. A general celebrating a Triumph was a triumphator.

Tullianum  Rome’s prison and execution chamber. Also known as the Carcer, it was located in the Forum.

urban praetor  See praetor urbanus.

urbs  City (often found in the dative form urbì).

Vestals  Virgin priestesses of the virgin goddess Vesta, who looked after her sacred flame in the Temple of Vesta in the Forum. It was believed that if the flame went out, Rome would fall.

vigiles  The nightwatchmen of Rome; the vigiles formed a military body whose primary duty was guarding against and putting out fires.

vigintiviri  Young men holding their first office, on their way to a senatorial career, with various responsibilities.

villa estate  See latifundia.

vis  Public violence (often found in the ablative form vi).